

POLICEMEN'S DEFINITIONS OF THE SITUATION  
AN EVALUATION OF A DIPLOMA PROGRAM  
IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS

**CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES**

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RELATIONS

by

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## ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory study having as its aim an evaluation of the effects, if any, the community relations courses offered to members of the Newfoundland Constabulary through a Diploma Program In Law Enforcement and Community Relations have on the personal outlook and perspective of those policemen enrolled in the program. The way thought best to assess these effects was to determine whether those enrolled in the Diploma Program have altered the traditional ways in which they define occupational situations in which they deal with the public. The sample for the study consisted of two groups drawn from the non-commissioned ranks of the Newfoundland Constabulary--an experimental group composed of those policemen enrolled in the Diploma Program, and a matched comparison group, composed of policemen as yet unfamiliar with the program. The participant observation technique, guided by Robert A. Stebbins' theory of the "definition of the situation," and strengthened by a thirteen point questionnaire based on Stebbins' theory, was utilized to collect the data. The analytic tool chosen was the method of constant comparison, an adaptive technique which compares the responses of the two groups to highlight their similarities and differences.

The research took place in the summers of 1972 and 1973 immediately following the completion of the policemen's academic year. The 1972 research was primarily concerned with the

development of preliminary categories and dimensions, with some preliminary comparisons being attempted. The 1973 research, guided by the categories and dimensions isolated the previous year, became more methodologically refined and concise, leading to more detailed and comprehensive data comparisons. Such in depth analysis led to the development of detailed hypotheses for future verification.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks also go to the administration of the Newfoundland Constabulary for their permission to conduct this research, and to the men of the force, for their patience in answering my many questions. I will always have the greatest respect for these men and the force they represent.

Personal thanks go to Dr. R.J. Lahey for his many helpful suggestions and comments; to Mr. John Bursey for his encouragement during the early stages of the research; to my mother, for her patience and interest; to my dearest, Sharon, for her understanding, encouragement and helpful comments during the many drafts of this work; and to my Dad, who so many years ago pointed me in the right direction. It was the memory of his unyielding spirit that encouraged me to continue with this project when everything else seemed to go awry.



## PREFACE

The diploma program in Law Enforcement and Community Relations was the 1972 inspiration of Dogan Akman, at that time Professor of Social Work at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Professor Akman felt that an advanced police training program focusing on specific problems of police organization and practice, and on certain community relations aspects of a polic man's duty were a necessity for the proper upgrading of the Newfoundland Constabulary, the provincial police force. The police organization and practice courses could be easily evaluated through classroom testing, a process which would be inadequate for the evaluation of the more practical effects of the community relations courses. Dr. Robert A. Stebbins, at that time a Professor of Sociology at Memorial, suggested that an on-the-job evaluation of the policemen's definitions of occupational situations in which they deal with the public, utilizing a theory of the "definition of the situation" which he himself developed, would be the most appropriate method to adopt for the evaluation of these community relations courses. Stebbins' proposal called for a four year project which, couched within the broad framework of his theory, would allow for the development of preliminary categories and dimensions in the

first year of the research. These categories and dimensions would then guide further research in the second year to determine the meanings policemen give to police-public encounters leading to the development of hypotheses which would receive rigid testing in the final years of the project. This researcher, expressing an interest in the criminal justice system of Newfoundland, was given the opportunity to revamp and redirect Stebbins' proposed evaluation to the particular needs of the Newfoundland Constabulary, and then to implement the research. This thesis constitutes the results of the first two years of this project.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgements . . . . .	ii
Preface . . . . .	iii
List of Tables . . . . .	vii
 CHAPTER	
I. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND . . . . .	1
The Theory of the Definition of the Situation . . . . .	2
Dynamics of the Theory . . . . .	4
Perception of Others . . . . .	8
In the Looking Glass . . . . .	8
Reactions (to perceptions in 1 through 10) . . . . .	8
Police Research . . . . .	9
II. STUDYING POLICEMEN'S DEFINITIONS OF SITUATIONS . . . . .	15
The Newfoundland Constabulary . . . . .	16
1. Street Patrol . . . . .	18
2. Traffic Division . . . . .	19
3. Criminal Investigation Division . . . . .	19
Sample and Methodology . . . . .	19

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. CITIZEN ENCOUNTERS . . . . .	27
Identification of Citizens and their	
Behavior . . . . .	27
Effects of the Diploma Program . . . . .	31
The Goal of Investigation . . . . .	31
Law-Abiding Citizens as Offenders . . . . .	31
Known Offenders and Troublemakers . . . . .	40
Citizens as Victims . . . . .	44
The Goal of the Arrest . . . . .	48
Law-Abiding Citizens as Offenders . . . . .	48
A Special Comparison . . . . .	50
IV. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	53
Hypotheses . . . . .	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	62
APPENDIX I . . . . .	66
APPENDIX II . . . . .	76

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Matching Information for the Fourteen Officers of First Year's Study . . . . .	77
II. Matching Information for the Twenty-six Officer Subjects of the Second Year's Study . . . . .	78
III. Operationalization of the Definition of the Situation . . . . .	79
IV. Number of Law-Abiding Citizens Encountered as Offenders while Investigating a Case . . .	80
V. Number of Law-Abiding Citizens Encountered as Victims while Investigating a Case . . .	80
VI. Number of Known-Offenders and Troublemakers Encountered as Offenders while Investigating a Case . . . . .	81
VII. Number of Law-Abiding Citizens Encountered as Offenders while Making an Arrest . . . . .	81

## CHAPTER I

### CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

For over one hundred years, members of the Newfoundland Constabulary have received their primary training from senior members of the force. Recently, this practice has changed somewhat with the inception of the diploma program in Law Enforcement And Community Relations, sponsored by the Extension Service, Memorial University, and the Department of Justice of the Government of Newfoundland.<sup>1</sup> The program consists of twelve courses offered at two per term over a three-year period (see Appendix 1 for an outline of the content of these courses). Its major aims are to provide police officers with:

- (a) the professional knowledge base and skills required in the pursuit and maintenance of high standards of law enforcement and community relations;
- (b) an understanding of the social, psychological, and cultural factors which impinge upon the life of communities, the enforcement of laws, and the role and status of policemen in the community;
- (c) a generic training in preparation for advanced study in specialized areas of law enforcement and community relations.

The first two aims of the program focus, in effect, on the interaction between policemen as they carry out their occupational roles and various citizens of the community with whom, in this capacity, they come in contact. It is

here among other places, that the architects of this program seek improvement. Put differently, the program is, in one of its aspects, an attempt to alter the ways St. John's policemen orient themselves toward or define occupational situations in which they deal with the public. It seeks, here, to change personal outlook or perspective rather than to add to factual knowledge. Thus, the way deemed appropriate to evaluate it, in addition to course examinations, was to determine whether the policemen's definitions of occupational situations concerning the public have changed with the training received in the courses.

Before presenting the results of the evaluation certain preliminaries must be dealt with. One of these is an examination of the idea of definition of the situation and the studies of police that, in some way, incorporate it. Another, found in the following chapter, is the design of the evaluation, which follows a third: the history and description of the Newfoundland Constabulary.

#### THE THEORY OF THE DEFINITION OF THE SITUATION

The birth of the situational approach to the study of social interaction is located in the pragmatic reactions to the anti-empirical tendencies of the Kantian and Neo-Kantian approaches to social enquiry (Martindale 1960). Led by

James and Dewey, the pragmatists focused on the experiential consequences of an individuals' actions, and on the social factors which contributed to the moulding of the social self. W.I. Thomas, claimed by many as the founder of the theory of the definition of the situation, advanced the pragmatic approach one step further by stating that the combination of the many social factors within an interactive setting are major determinants of the types of responses precipitated within such settings. Thomas saw predispositions as being of secondary importance in the determination of social behavior, stating that one should analyze the situation itself as the causal factor:

The situation in which the person finds himself is taken as containing the configuration of factors conditioning the behavior response.

(Thomas and Znaniecki, 1927: 176)

Because of the unconventionality of this theoretical approach, most social scientists rejected both its foundations and its methodological base, in favor of a less subjective approach to data analysis and interpretation. Some experiments, claiming to encompass the definition of the situation in their analyses were conducted in the fifties and early sixties (e.g. Deutscher, 1964; Gorden, 1952; and Lerner and Becker, 1962). These works, however, do no more than pay lip-service to the importance of the dynamics of the situation in the determination of behavior.



An exception to this trend is the laboratory study by Peter McHugh (1968), which, by controlling certain variables, isolated some of the factors that influence the meaning one gives to a situation.

The first, and to date only serious attempt to systematize and validate the theory of the definition of the situation through its application to field research, has been carried out by Robert A. Stebbins (1967; 1969; 1970). Because Stebbins' approach gives us the theoretical and methodological base with which to gather information on actors' definitions of situations, and because definition of the situation is the focus of this research, this approach was adopted for this research.

#### DYNAMICS OF THE THEORY

Briefly and simply put, the definition of the situation is the meaning human beings attach to the social, physical, and psychological events of the immediate present, a meaning which guides their subsequent action there (Stebbins, 1969). This process is a process of mind; a subjective process by which an individual participating in any interactive situation mentally isolates those components of the objective situation which are seen by him to affect any one of his action orientations, and therefore must be given meaning before he can act (Stebbins, 1967).

This personal structuring of the subjective situation is affected by two sets of factors:

1. There are situational factors, which include the salient temporal, social, and physical boundaries of the subjective situation. These refer to the time span in which the interaction occurs, the other participants and their particular reactions to the actor and his intentions, and the physical setting of the situation.
2. There are individual predispositions from the individual's own background; what Stebbins calls the "personality-cultural" variables. These personality-cultural variables comprise an organized set of predispositions which one brings to any situation. It includes those predispositions stemming from past definitions of situations, from former and future plans of actions, from past and present action orientations, from sets of attitudes and values, and from one's social and personal sets of identities. Most such predispositions have their origins in the society and the social groups to which the individual belongs. However, no situation is related to the entire set of predispositions. Rather the elements of the subjective situation call out only those factors salient for the relevant

social setting. In this study, those predispositions called forth relate to police-citizen encounters. Stebbins presents a sequential model outlining the process of selection of one's definition of a situation (Stebbins, 1969).

1. Typical actors in a given identity enter a typical setting with a particular intention or action orientation in mind.
2. Certain aspects of these surroundings, some of which relate to these intentions, activate or awaken some of the predispositions the actors characteristically carry with them.
3. The aspects of the surroundings, the orientations, and the activated predispositions, when considered together, initiate further selection of a definition.
4. This definition guides subsequent goal-directed action in the situation, at least until reinterpretation occurs.

Stebbins claims that the many interpretations which one can give to diverse situations can be grouped into three major categorical types-cultural definitions, habitual personal definitions, and unique personal definitions. Cultural definitions are collective representations or the standard meanings of events embedded within a community culture or subculture, and are consensually shared to the extent that those who are members of a particular group (i.e. citizens of St. John's) are aware that those in it recognize and utilize that definition in the same ways that they do. They differ from habitual personal definitions in that habitual personal definitions are characterized by a non-consensual sharing of meanings. That is, the same category of

situation holds roughly the same meaning for a particular class of actors participating in it, yet each individual participant is more or less unaware that people like him who are having the same situational experiences, define them in the same way. These two types of definitions are distinguished from a third type--unique personal definitions--which are definitions of novel situations.

Because one is unable to determine from unique personal definitions if there has been any change in the ways policemen define police-public encounters (for by definition each unique personal definition would be new, allowing no commonalities against which to compare one with the other), concentration will be on the first two types of definitions. Further, for the purposes of this study, it is unnecessary to distinguish cultural definitions from habitual personal definitions, since emphasis is not on their distinctness, but on the possible changes in them following classroom instruction.

Stebbins presents thirteen statements that serve as generalized indicators of any definition of the situation. These indicators have been theorized and often empirically demonstrated to play an important role in situationally based and situationally focused explanations of behavior (Stebbins, 1969).<sup>2</sup>

### Perception of Others

1. Identification by the identity incumbents of the relevant others present.
2. The incumbents' perceptions of the evaluation these others have made of the situation as established with reference to the others' identifications of themselves, including their moral and emotional or sentimental reactions to the immediate setting.
3. The incumbents' perceptions of the goals or intentions of the others while in the setting.
4. The incumbents' perceptions of the action (strategies for reaching the goals) of the relevant others.
5. The incumbents' perceptions of the justifications or vocabulary of motives associated with the others' plans of action.

### In The Looking Glass

6. The identity incumbents' perceptions of the identification of them by the relevant others.
7. The incumbents' perceptions of the evaluation of the situation imputed to them by the others.
8. The incumbents' perceptions of the intentions imputed to them while in the situation.
9. The incumbents' perceptions of the plans of action imputed to them.
10. The incumbents' perceptions of the justifications of the plans imputed to them.

### Reactions (to perceptions in 1 through 10)

11. The incumbents' evaluations of the situation.
12. The incumbents' plans of action.
13. The incumbents' justifications of the plans.

The adaptation of these theoretical statements to this study, police-public encounters, is presented in Table III, Appendix II.

## POLICE RESEARCH

Studies of law enforcement agencies were limited in the first half of this century. Those that were conducted tended to concentrate on the deviant rather than the pursuer. They were usually sponsored by a government agency investigating the degree of corruption within some police organization, with little if any emphasis on the role of the policeman in the community. With the sharp rise in crime rates and incidents of public disorders of the early sixties, the dynamics of the judicial process came under firey attack from the press and the public, especially from the new found voices of scholars, minority groups, and the young (Bittner, 1964). Such an atmosphere awakened social scientists to the wealth of scientific data one could attain through the study of this organization, with the first and immediate aim being to understand something of the role the law enforcement officer must play in law enforcement settings. Such works as Arthur Nierderhoffer's Behind The Shield, Jerome Skolnick's Justice Without Trial, and Michael Banton's The Policeman In The Community, illustrate this attempt to view the policeman in his own setting.

Research focusing directly on the ways policemen define the occupational situations in which they deal with the public appear, to date, to be non-existent. That is, selected aspects of these police definitions have been

identified and analyzed, but no study has investigated the definitions to the extent possible through the theory of the definition of the situation. Studies of police-community relations came closest to this perspective, and it was these that were reviewed for their application to this study.

A review of this literature showed that it focuses on personal aims, giving only fleeting and general attention to the policemen's view of citizens and their perception of the citizens' views of them, as factors affecting the police-public relationship. James A. Wilson's (1964) work is typical of this approach. In his desire to discover the effects of increased honesty and efficiency on police morale and citizen respect, he touches on the policeman's view of the citizens' general view of his role as law enforcement officer both before and following a change in administration personnel. He notes that the policeman's perception of the citizens' view of his role as law enforcement officer became more positive following this restructuring process. Wilson claims this slight change resulted from the restructuring process itself, but was not of strength sufficient to better the policeman's morale (Wilson, 1964). Although interesting in its own right, such research adds little to our knowledge concerning police definitions of public encounters except to state such definitions are affected by the demeanor of the citizen encountered.

Chapel and Wilkin's (1969) study takes a more practical approach to the study of police-public relations by suggesting those areas in which the police could improve their rapport with the public. They devote a chapter to the policeman's view of his public image, stating that such views are affected by a number of geographic and demographic variables, especially by the amount of assistance the public is perceived giving the law enforcement officer. Compared with what such research could discover, this is a rather general and loose view of the policeman's perception of his public image, with no significant attempt to analyze the intricacies of the situations that might affect this image.

Preiss and Elrich (1966) use the police organization as a model against which to test and revamp the propositions of role theory. In working toward this end, they focus on the various processes at work in the acquisition of the role of policeman. Included among these processes is the influence of the policeman's perceived public image of himself on his perception of the type of role he should adopt while interacting in this capacity. It was discovered that policemen generally overestimate the esteem which citizens attribute to them, and thus acquire a somewhat inaccurate view of themselves. However, this research as well, looks at the overall role of the law enforcement officer, and not at the particular social situations and their many complexities which might necessarily affect the way he



perceives his role and his reactions to his perception of this role.

The final piece of research considered in this section comes closest to the aims of my own project, yet its point of concentration is not specifically on the meanings policemen give to a police-public encounter. This research is that of Albert Reiss, Jr. (1971). It identifies many of the situational factors that influence the interpretation a policeman gives to a police-citizen counter, including the type of call (police or citizen initiated), the type of citizen encountered, and the type of citizen reaction to police intervention. However, the data were gathered and interpreted by third parties--observers--in contrast to the approach of the present study, which focuses on the actors' own interpretations of the various incidents. In the present evaluation both observation and unstructured interviewing were used to gather the required data, a procedure that avoids the pitfalls of observation as the sole method of data collection (see Schutz, 1967: 54-55).

Having reviewed a representative selection of the available literature for its bearing on the present study, it was clear that only peripheral attention had been given to policemen's definitions of police-public situations. This situation, coupled with the goal of evaluation of a

particular program of instruction, suggested an exploratory approach to the collection of data. In this study, such an exploratory approach attained its theoretical and methodological validity by being structured within the framework of Stebbins' theory of the definition of the situation. There is enough flexibility within this framework to allow exploration--to develop preliminary categories leading to the formation of theoretical propositions. The first year of the study was primarily concerned with the development of preliminary categories, their dimensions and properties, with collection of data taking place through use of a questionnaire based on Stebbins' thirteen indicators. The second year of the research, guided by these categories, and again using the questionnaire mentioned above, attempted to determine the detailed meanings the officers gave to police-public encounters, leading to the development of precise hypotheses for future testing. It is to a discussion of the methods of this approach that we turn in Chapter II.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The program was specially designed for the Newfoundland Constabulary by Dogan D. Akman who was, at that time, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Memorial University, in collaboration with John Browne, Deputy Assistant Chief, Newfoundland Constabulary. A description of it is presented in Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup>A detailed listing of the works which support these various statements through research and theoretical postulation can be found in Stebbins (1969: 197-198).

## CHAPTER II

### STUDYING POLICEMEN'S DEFINITIONS OF SITUATIONS

Richard Rudner, in his rebuttal to those who claim the physical sciences are the only methodologically sound sciences, states:

The methodology of a scientific discipline is not a matter of its transient techniques but of its logic of justification. The method of a science is, indeed, the rationale on which it bases its acceptance or rejection of hypotheses or theories.

Rudner, 1967: 5

He realizes that the complex and spontaneously changing human situations which social scientists attempt to study necessitates the development of many of these transient and innovative techniques, while operating within the scope of traditional scientific methodology. As shown in the previous chapter, no data have ever been systematically gathered on how policemen define their encounters with the public within the broad framework of the theory of the definition of the situation. Thus, one innovative technique or set of techniques, the grounded theory approach to data collection (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), was deemed both legitimate and suitable for the aims of this study.

The grounded theory approach begins as exploration, its aims being to develop categories, dimensions, and

testable hypotheses. It utilizes, chiefly, though not necessarily solely, the participant observation technique to collect its data, a technique which, in this study, was given both direction and strength by being couched within the theory of the definition of the situation. This theory encourages the researcher to focus his observations on specific aspects of the policeman's immediate social environment--in this case, the environment of public encounters. The analytic tool of this approach is the method of constant comparative analysis, an adaptable technique which amounts to the comparison of two or more incidents, items or interpretations of events in order to highlight their similarities and differences, and to develop categories and their properties based on these comparisons. Charges that the grounded theory approach is unconventional and methodologically weak are not considered here, since responses to them have already been made by Rudner (1967) and by Glaser and Strauss (1967), among others.

#### THE NEWFOUNDLAND CONSTABULARY

The sample for this study was drawn from the non-commissioned ranks of the Newfoundland Constabulary, Newfoundland's provincial police force.<sup>1</sup> The history of this force is unique and colorful, exemplifying in its growth and maturation the influence of its close ties with British

police traditions. Its origins date back to the 1870's when, with the withdrawal of regular British forces, at that time the principal policing agency on the island, Newfoundland was compelled to establish its own police force. That force received official sanction in 1871. Under the guidance of its commanding officer, Thomas Foley, and other former officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary, the Newfoundland force began to organize various detachments throughout the more populous regions of the island. Through the ensuing years its ranks expanded and its expertise grew, although it still lagged far behind many of the more progressive police forces of North America and Atlantic Canada. With the advent of Confederation in 1949, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police replaced the Constabulary as the principal policing agency of the island. The Constabulary maintained its status as the provincial police force, but its duties were confined to the city of St. John's. Only in times of emergency, as the violent loggers' strike of 1959, are the Constabulary called upon to exercise their authority outside the boundaries of the capital city.

One of the unique traditions of this force among North American police forces that has carried over from the days of the British is the standing order that forbids Newfoundland policemen to carry firearms. The only weapon the policeman has is his baton, a fourteen inch wooden stick used sparingly to rap the head of a would-be assailant. It

is claimed that this conspicuous absence of police firearms is a contributing factor in the rarity of extremely violent crimes in the city. Most local criminals feel they need not fear being fatally shot or maimed by a policeman's bullet. Thus, they see little reason to carry firearms when committing property crime or other non-violent illegal activities. According to the annual reports of the Constabulary over 80 per cent of all crimes committed in St. John's in 1972 and 1973 were classed as non-violent. In other words, Constabulary members are usually called on to investigate minor thefts, break and entry, minor drug offences, and traffic violations. In over one hundred years of policing Newfoundland, only one policeman has lost his life while performing his duties as a peace officer. This tragic incident occurred in central Newfoundland during the loggers' strike of 1959, and is believed to be more of an accident than a deliberate attempt at murder.

At present the Constabulary is comprised of 209 men who are divided into three divisions:

#### 1. Street Patrol

The Street Patrol is the backbone of the force, which is responsible for twenty-four hour surveillance of the city. Most complaints received by the police department meet with preliminary investigation through this division.

## 2. Traffic Division

The Traffic Division is responsible for maintaining the free flow of traffic throughout the city, as well as the investigation of all traffic accidents which occur within the city boundaries.

## 3. Criminal Investigation Division

The Criminal Investigation Division is responsible for investigating those incidents determined by the Street Patrol as needing further probing, as well as complaints made directly to their office. To this division goes the task of solving all major crimes in the city.

The combined effort and cooperation of these three divisions, along with an administrative and clerical staff, provide St. John's with satisfactory law enforcement.

### SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

The effects reported in this study were observed during the summers of 1972 and 1973 in the occupational behavior of members of the first and second classes of the diploma program after partial completion of it. They made up, in essence, the experimental groups of the study. Their definitions of work situations involving the public and those of a matched comparison group or control group were studied through a combination of observation and interviewing within



an ex-post-facto experimental design (see Greenwood, 1945: 32).<sup>2</sup> The first experimental group for this study was made up of some of the first class of policemen following their first year in the program. These policemen were not chosen at random for acceptance to this course, but were painstakingly screened by the higher echelon of the police administration to ensure that only those of ability were accepted. Of the original sample of fourteen, seven were dropped from the study, because they were employed in administrative positions within the force, which allowed them little contact with the public. Since the focus of this study is on police-public encounters, those seven were deemed unsuitable. This left seven for the first experimental group.

In the following year of the research, the second experimental group was composed of some of those in the first experimental group, now having completed their second year of study, plus some of those enrolled in the second class following their first year of study. Three of the seven of the first experimental group were dropped from the sample, since they too had now entered the administrative structure of the force. This left four men from the first class to participate in the second experimental group. Of the fifteen members of this second class, five pursued administrative roles within the force, and were dropped from the study, while one was ill when the 1973 research was conducted. The remaining nine officers were combined with the four from the

first class, to complete the second experimental group (N=13). Since the number of observable subjects of the first class was so small (four out of a possible fourteen), it was decided to combine the two experimental groups in the second summer, instead of treating them as two separate units. The larger N strengthens the findings. It should also be noted that, in contrast to the first class, members of the second class were permitted to volunteer for the program.

In order to evaluate effectively the diploma program, it was necessary to have comparison groups against which the responses of the experimental groups could be effectively compared.<sup>3</sup> In both years, the comparison groups were comprised of policemen as yet unfamiliar with the diploma program. Members of each group were matched with the corresponding experimental group on all relevant variables; that is, age, rank, education, rural urban background, length of service, and branch of service (see Appendix II, Tables I and II). This tended to standardize the effects of personal background and occupation role (the bulk of Stebbins' personality-cultural variables that would relate to police-citizen encounters) of both groups on their definitions of encounters with the public.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, those chosen for the comparison groups were judged by police officials and myself to be as keen and competent as any of the men enrolled in the diploma program.<sup>5</sup> Whenever possible, those used for the comparison group in the 1972 study were used again in 1973.

Since this evaluation began as exploration, two or three days were spent with each officer during which this researcher observed every police-public encounter, classified it according to type of situation, noted its major characteristics, and subsequently conducted unstructured interviews based on Stebbins' thirteen indicators (see Table III, Appendix II). These interviews, which were of thirty to forty-five minutes duration, were conducted immediately following the occurrence of an encounter. This ensured accurate recall. Only a portion of the encounters recorded were discussed in the interviews. The selection of particular incidents depended partly on the requirement that for each officer the widest possible range of citizen encounters be assessed. As the number of incidents encountered increased, the amount of new information correspondingly decreased. Discussion of an average of five incidents, whatever the type, tended to constitute the point of diminishing returns. In the 1972 study, the diploma students were observed and interviewed on twenty-nine incidents, while the comparison group were observed and interviewed on twenty-seven.

Utilizing the method of comparative analysis mentioned above, the responses of each group to each question or operational indicator bearing on a particular category of situation involving a particular category of the public, were combined, common themes isolated, and then compared with the responses by the other groups to the same situation and

category of public to highlight their similarities and differences. Such a comparison helped to standardize the major effects of the second set of factors that influence the meaning one gives to a situation--Stebbins' situational factors. Since the intent of the first year's research was to develop categories and their properties for incorporation into hypotheses for future rather than present testing, these comparisons were initially loose, leading to general observations on the characteristic responses of each group.

The second summer's research, guided by the categories and properties isolated the previous year, was methodologically more refined and concise. The researcher entered the field with these particular categories in mind, observing and interviewing with reference to them. An equal number of incidents of each type of police-public situation for both groups were observed and analyzed (see Tables IV, V, VI, VII, Appendix II). In the 1973 study the diploma students were interviewed and observed in forty incidents and the comparison group in thirty-seven, for a total of seventy-seven incidents.

Research during the second summer was still flexible enough to permit discovery of additional categories and dimensions, and a number of them were isolated and incorporated into the developing grounded theory. The analytic approach of the 1973 study was similar to that of the previous year, except that, guided by the accumulated data,

a more detailed and concise analysis could be carried out. To add further strength to the findings, the comparative technique was also used in a special comparison of the responses of two officers, who were members of the comparison group in the 1972 study, but who had enrolled in the diploma program with the second class and were thus members of the experimental group in the 1973 research. In this particular analysis, all variables, both situational and personality-cultural were evenly matched.

Clearly, this evaluation is no example of ordinary exploratory research. From the beginning data collection, though flexible, took place within the confines of the theory of the definition of the situation and an ex-post-facto experimental design, both of which are indispensable aspects of this evaluation of the diploma program. The larger focus of the project, in other words, called for certain empirical and theoretical controls, i.e. strict control of situational and personality-cultural factors. But, since no data have even been systematically gathered within the framework of the theory of the definition of how policemen, in Newfoundland or elsewhere, define their encounters with the public, the wisest decision was for a flexible approach to data collection within the framework of that theory and the experimental design. Plenty of time remains in the future for movement toward precision in data collection. In the meantime, no unwarranted assumptions have been made about

how St. John's policemen define situations involving citizens, simply to achieve, from the start, the precision we will eventually achieve--with greater validity--anyway.<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The material used in this section is drawn exclusively from a study by Arthur Fox (1970), the only source known which focuses exclusively on the historical roots of the Constabulary.

<sup>2</sup>Chapin (1955: Chapters V and X) has collected several studies illustrating the ex-post-facto design.

<sup>3</sup>Because this evaluation was conceived several months after the start of the diploma program, the researcher was unable to determine these policemen's definitions of occupational situations before experiencing a year of instruction in the program. The only alternative was to select a matched comparison group, which would serve to standardize the effects social background could have on the ways policemen define their occupational encounters.

<sup>4</sup>Since the focus of this study is on policemen's cultural and habitual personal definitions which, by their very definitions, rest in the individual's background, matching on demographic variables should help guard against their idiosyncratic effects on such definitions.

<sup>5</sup>There were no precise criteria of keenness and competence used to select these men for the comparison group. Rather, it was the subjective judgments of the researcher and police officials that prevailed.

<sup>6</sup>The concept of the definition of the situation serves as a "sensitizing concept" (Blumer, 1969: 147-148), whose function it is to suggest directions along which to look in research and to give us a sense of what is relevant there. Precise reference and clear-cut identification are not intended. See also Denzin's (1972: 85-87) discussion on "sensitizing a concept."

## CHAPTER III

### CITIZEN ENCOUNTERS

The results of this analysis for each category of situation encountered are presented in the sequence followed in the interview guide, which is the sequence of the thirteen indicators that guided data collection (see Appendix II, Table III). Since the object of the 1972 research was to establish categories and their properties for further study, only brief mention will be made of the rather general observations made on the characteristic response of each group as they apply to the 1973 data.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF CITIZENS AND THEIR BEHAVIOR

Although policemen in the two groups differ little, if any, in their identification of the people they were observed confronting and of the behavior those people were believed to be engaging in (Indicator I), knowledge of how this is done is critical to an understanding of other aspects of their definitions of these sorts of situations. For this is the St. John's policeman's taxonomy of a significant portion of his working world, which must be described before considering the effects of the diploma program.

The majority of policemen in every community interact in some way with its non-police members whom I shall call



citizens. Policemen in St. John's, and probably those elsewhere, tend to identify the citizens with whom they come in contact during the course of their work in two broad ways: by community criteria and by police criteria. This research turned up three community criteria: age category (child, teenager, young adult, middleaged adult, old adult); sex, (male, female); socioeconomic status (poor, average income, rich).<sup>1</sup>

Two police criteria were found: legal reputation and occupational goals. In terms of their legal reputation, most citizens confronted are presumed to be law-abiding up to the time of contact, if for no other reason than that, formally or informally, they are unknown to the police in connection with any unlawful behavior. Exoffenders, regarded by the police as rehabilitated, are included in this category. A handful of citizens, occasionally constituting whole families, are known to the police, and possibly the neighborhood in which they live, as troublemakers. Troublemakers have, at best, been convicted of only minor offences, such as driving while drunk or disorderly conduct. But they have been associated, in some fashion, with illegal behavior in their part of the city for so long that the police immediately suspect their involvement when a crime of any sort is reported there. Known Offenders are citizens who have been convicted of at least one major crime and who have so far failed to demonstrate to the police that they are sufficiently

rehabilitated to warrant recategorizing them as law-abiding citizens.

Perhaps the most complex form of identification of citizens is made in terms of the goals that bring an officer to the problematic situation. So far, this research has provided five major occupational goals pursued by St. John's policemen: to make an arrest or consider making one, to investigate a case, to keep order, to answer a complaint, and to dispense information. Each goal, however, is pursued somewhat differently, depending on the kind of citizen behavior or activity toward which the policeman's effort is directed. Thus, the citizens are further identified in connection with this behavior. Turning to the goal of making an arrest, the officer is concerned with one type of individual, the offender, labelled according to the crime he commits; namely, drunkard, traffic violator, burglar, thief, vandal, and so forth.

The goal of investigating a case is associated with the largest number of different citizen activities. St. John's policemen were observed investigating traffic accidents, burglaries, robberies, embezzlements, frauds (cheques only), fires, assaults, murders, drug offenses, and sudden deaths. Citizens in these situations are further identified in terms of their perceived role in the incident being investigated. So generally, they are seen as offenders (both principals and accessories before and after the fact),

victims, witnesses, informants or experts. Specifically, they are identified as, for example, a burglar, a victim of assault, a witness to a traffic accident, an informant in a narcotics case, an expert who performs an autopsy.

Keeping order, as a goal, has been observed, so far in the evaluation, to bring policemen into contact with citizens who have created traffic hazards (e.g., double-parked truck), got into fights or family quarrels, and accumulated in large crowds that must, for some reason, be dispersed. When answering a complaint is a goal, interaction takes place with one, possibly two, categories of citizens: complainers and culprits. St. John's policemen deal with complainers and culprits (if they can be found) who are connected with assorted forms of disorderly conduct, such as excessive noise late at night, or connected with property damage, usually caused by vandals. Dispensing information results in brief exchanges with relatively new citizens in the community or tourists who are seeking directions to some point in the city or requesting miscellaneous data, such as how many boats enter the harbor daily.

Policemen were observed over the two years pursuing all these goals. But making arrests and investigating cases were by far the most common, and attention is confined to these in this analysis. The citizens typically encountered here are middle-class males, all ages, law abiding or known offenders, and offenders or victims.

When keeping order does occur, it is usually handled by officers manning the police van, while dispensing information normally falls to the man on the beat. Such physical constraints as seating for only two officers in the van and minimal citizen contact while on the beat, prevented the observer from obtaining much useful information on the way officers pursue these goals.

#### EFFECTS OF THE DIPLOMA PROGRAM

The effects of the diploma program on its participants, are reported under the headings of the two major goals of St. John's policemen: investigation and arresting. Their definitions of investigation situations are presented for encounters with law-abiding citizens who have become offenders, known offenders and troublemakers, and citizens as victims. Police definitions of arrest situations involving known offenders and troublemakers are the same as investigative situations containing these people. Within these two goals the effects observed are presented in the sequence of the thirteen indicators. (The specific questions asked are listed in Table III, Appendix II).

#### THE GOAL OF INVESTIGATION

##### Law-Abiding Citizens as Offenders

1) While investigating cases, policemen encounter citizens in a variety of potentially illegal incidents from traffic accidents to rape and murder. There are two main

categories of such incidents from the standpoint of an investigating officer: minor offenses, including traffic accidents, minor property damage, and public disturbances; and major offenses, including rape, assault, car theft, fire, and all other offenses involving bodily harm or potential bodily harm. In all such incidents both student and comparison groups assume the citizen-offender is guilty of the offense, even when the case has yet to be presented in court. As noted later, such assumptions influence the ways policemen perceive a citizen and in turn how they believe he perceives them. The citizen referred to throughout this section is of the heretofore law-abiding variety; the situation of the troublemaker and known offender being defined differently.

2) Minor offenses, prosecution for which results in no significant loss of freedom, are seen by both the university and the comparison groups as meaning little to these citizens. Policemen believe a citizen knows such incidents can be handled by civil law or settled out of court, with little if any police influence exercised over his fate. Comments, such as, "they saw it more of a joke than anything," or "didn't mean too much," indicate awareness of this perceived lack of concern and disinterest for the police officer's intervention in the case.

When investigating major offenses both university and comparison groups perceive the citizen-offender as anxious

about his involvement in such events and their consequences for him. The policemen commented:

He seemed a bit worried when questioned.

She didn't like the idea and was scared.

He was scared.

(He was) fearful he would be locked up.

(He had a) fear of having to go to jail.

3-5) In the 1972 research, it was found that policemen of the student and comparison groups see the citizens whom they encounter as intending to cooperate with them in a manner appropriate to the situation, which citizens justify from their respect for law and police power to inflict penalties. The officers' perceptions of citizens' minor offenses noted in the research reported here, confirm the first part of this statement; that is, the offender will cooperate with them during investigations. Reasons for such cooperation reflect an assumption officers make about a citizen's actions--they cooperate because they have no fear of losing their freedom as a result of this encounter. Cooperation, the police believe, is seen by citizens as placing them in a more favorable light with the investigating officer, hopefully leading to dismissal or reduction of the original charge. In the words of a couple of patrolmen:

(He intended) to give a story to make the young fellow look bad, because he felt he was right and the young fellow was wrong.

They intended to give details to the police to convince us whom they considered responsible, because they felt they were not at fault.

When major offenses are being investigated cooperation is present under some conditions and absent under others. Citizens who are seen by police officers of both student and comparison groups as worried about their involvement in the incident, are also seen as cooperating with them. This they do in hope of beating the rap and its associated penalty. They are perceived as fearful of losing their freedom and as attempting anything to avoid arrest. Official suspicion of these citizens' intentions, actions and justifications are reflected in the following comments:

(He planned) to cooperate a bit in order to beat the rap.

(He intended) to cooperate to some extent in order to avoid arrest.

(He wanted to) try and explain the situation and try and get to where he was going because he wanted to get home.

At other times policemen of both groups perceive offenders who are not only worried about their involvement in major incidents, but also fear the officer and his authority, as uncooperative. The policemen believe these offenders justify such behavior out of a fear that cooperation will lead them into deeper trouble and only hinder their chances of avoiding the potential charge. As the officers put it:

(She intended) to play it by ear and tell a story to fit the situation, because she lives in a poor situation.

(He wanted) to try and get out of it, because he feared his mother and the police.

He feared us and did not wish to cooperate.

6) It was observed in 1972 that the police, because they are generally uniformed when on the job, tend to see themselves reflected in the eyes of citizens as policemen. More subtle reflections are found among the students who say they are sometimes defined as mediator in a dispute, as competent protector of the public welfare, or as humane individuals concerned for the unfortunate members of the community. Further evidence of the existence of these reflected images is found in the responses to indicators 7 through 13. Members of the comparison group could see no other image of themselves than their normal role of law enforcement officer, which is enforcing laws he is told to enforce.

7-10) Concerning the goal of investigation, the first major difference between the police student and his counterpart in the comparison group comes out in his perceptions of the intentions, actions, and justifications for those actions as seen through the eyes of citizens. Still, when it comes to minor offenses, both groups see themselves in much the same way, through the looking glass of the citizen, as policemen doing their job. In a few of these incidents, the offender does see the student officer, according to the latter,



as playing the role of mediator in a dispute; it is his intention to listen to all sides and make an objective assessment on the basis of the known facts.

The students see themselves through the eyes of citizens involved in major offenses as intending to act with all haste to prevent any serious injury or property damage, and as attempting to alleviate any misfortune that may have befallen either the citizens or the public. The justifications perceived as attributed for such actions harmonize with their intentions, which are to aid and comfort those needing it. They commented:

He knew we would continue investigation into the incident because a crime was committed and he knew lives could have been lost.

He knew I would check it out because a serious crime had been committed.

(He) thought he would be penalized because he had done wrong.

Such intentions, actions and justification are seen by the students to be imputed to them by all citizens, whether defined as cooperative or uncooperative.

When it comes to major offenses, those of the comparison group see intentions, actions, and justifications attributed to them by citizens that are similar to those of minor offenses. They see themselves as intending to arrest and detain for some sort of actual or potential violation of the law. They see their plans justified as part of their job of maintaining law and order and bringing to justice

those who challenge this goal:

(He knew) we would arrest him, because he thought we had a right to do so.

They knew we would arrest and convey to the lock-up.

She thought I would have her summoned to court.

(He thought) I would interview him and take a statement and then convey him back to work.

11) The difference in the definitions of situations held by the student group and those held by the comparison group are most noticeable in their reactions to the various perceptions described above. Let us turn first, however, to the similarities that were uncovered in the 1973 study. Minor incidents that are investigated, are dismissed with little concern by both groups. A number of other incidents, of more serious nature, are looked on by both with open-minded perceptiveness and understanding. Neither group is willing to accept, without question, the word of a complainer or victim against an offender or culprit unless such accusations are substantiated by concrete facts. In the policemen's words:

The cab driver is just as saucy as the drunk, so it wasn't all his fault.

It seems one is picking on someone, (the offender), to prove someone else is right.

The evidence did not warrant that I take action against this boy, even though many claimed he was the culprit.

Whether the offender is considered cooperative or uncooperative, those of the diploma program, as noted in

both years of the research, show a deep concern for the consequences of the situation for both the offender and the community as a whole, while hoping for a successful, though harmless conclusion to it. This group also expresses genuine concern, when the situation warrants it, for the physical and mental well-being of offenders. As some of these officers remarked:

We were now satisfied that everything was alright and no harm had been done.

There was not sufficient evidence to indicate the boy did start the fire, but there was evidence he had been with others who had done it and thus, should be strongly reprimanded for his actions. If necessary, he should be taken to a psychiatrist and given help.

I felt the boy, age 17, was home at the time and knew how the fire started. He is very backward and appears to be retarded.

(I was) trying to solve this crime by interviewing a person who, when he knew he had been caught, told the truth to the police.

The comparison group, which becomes entangled in incidents of as great an intensity and importance as the police students, exhibits little concern for either the well-being of offenders or the community. Comments, such as the following, are typical:

He should be checked into for drugs.

It meant absolutely nothing.

Another routine incident.

It meant nothing.

12) Most officers stated they follow the usual police procedures in dealing with the majority of offenses. As mentioned, minor ones are treated with open-mindedness and understanding. The incidents, in which the students show concern for the physical and mental well-being of the citizen and the community, produce plans of actions in accord with this evaluation. These policemen say they plan to provide for the offenders' more serious needs and to protect the community by cutting down on the frequency of such incidents in the future. In their words:

After finding two stolen cars in the area and seeing several car parts around, this man was the logical suspect, and was interviewed to see if any information could be obtained.

I charged him with the lesser charge because of the explanation he gave.

If the boy is involved, I shall request a psychiatric examination of him.

Parents of the boys were to be informed as to what I knew about them.

13) Those incidents considered routine and acted on as routine are justified by the student policemen for that reason--they are routine and demand routine handling. Those actions reflecting interest in the well-being of the offender and the community are also justified in a related manner.

The boys involved were only five years old, but by informing their parents this may stop their acts. And, if not, maybe they need psychiatric help.

I justified it this way because of his explanation of the incident.

If the boy is mentally ill, then he is not aware of the seriousness of what he did.

### Known Offenders and Troublemakers

1) When the police are investigating a case involving troublemakers or known offenders, it is usually a serious offense. Conviction for such offenses threatens such people with the loss of freedom through imprisonment or with ostracism from the community or with both. These threats, along with previous encounters with the law, account for the hostility toward the investigating officer. On the other side, reactions to troublemakers and known offenders are colored by policemen's previous experience with them and their perceptions of the hostility projected toward them. So, police definitions of situations concerning these citizens, including investigative situations, are bound to differ from those concerning other types of citizens.

2) In the 1972 research, it was noted that both student and comparison groups see troublemakers and known offenders as disrespectful of the law and hostile toward its officers. The 1973 portion confirms these observations, while adding another: the troublemaker and known offender are viewed as fearing the law and as suspicious of the investigating officer and his motives. In the policemen's words:

He was suspected of theft and a bit reluctant to talk.

The person arrested seemed to be concerned to some extent, but he did not have any comment on the situation

and was reluctant to make a statement or submit himself to any test.

They felt the police were always after them and would do anything to get them convicted of a crime.

He was scared because he didn't want to lose his freedom. He didn't like to get caught.

3-5) In both the 1972 and 1973 studies, police perceptions of citizens' goals in these encounters, their plans of actions, and their justifications of these plans and goals appear to be similar for both university and comparison groups. Troublemakers and known offenders are seen by both groups as intending to be uncooperative in a way appropriate to the situation out of disrespect for law and policemen. They may even be seen as planning to lie and in other ways deceive the officer who is before them. They commented:

They planned to run and try to get away . . . because . . . they were caught in the act of stealing.

Smith hit Brown's car . . . but wanted to give a report in such a way that he did not look as guilty.

He intended to play it by ear and tell the story to fit the situation.

6) In addition to what was observed in the first summer's research on the reflected image of policemen, the 1973 research has produced some new observations with respect to known offenders and troublemakers. Previous experience with the law has left them, as these officers see it, with certain unflattering stock views of the policeman and his role in the social order. He is seen as a ruthless, though simultaneously engaging person, who attempts to seduce these

offenders into confessing responsibility for a crime, because another conviction enhances his image both with his peers and with his superiors. Both groups also see an inhumanity attributed to themselves in their dealings with known offenders and troublemakers, including the view that they would turn such people in for the least transgression of the law.

7-10) In harmony with the perceptions in Number 6 is the perceived attribution that investigating officers of both groups will put extra effort into an investigation in order to obtain a conviction of a known offender or troublemaker, thereby, ensuring his return to the penitentiary. Investigating policemen also see themselves through the eyes of these deviants as very strict and impersonal in their inquiries and as attempting to hide any favorable information that might help them. Two policemen stated their views on this issue in the following manner:

The person mostly knew I was suspicious of the story he was telling, but felt I was only trying to get him into trouble.

He knew I would charge him with one offense, but he wasn't going to let me pin the others on him.

11) Because both groups of policemen have set images of the known offender and the troublemaker, and they believe, he of them, their evaluations of encounters with him are much stronger than one normally finds. Both groups show considerable concern for the seriousness of their offenses, both

for the community and for the unsuspecting victim. They are also concerned about the dangerousness of such people. Neither group shows much interest in them personally or in their plight, nor do they attempt to rationalize their behavior. The image of the known offender as a dangerous, thoughtless criminal prevails:

A serious offense had been committed, and an all out effort should be made to apprehend the accused.

(It) meant a lot because he had a gun and wouldn't shy away from using it.

(It) meant the guy was in the process of making a nuisance of himself. When the guy is drinking he is a very destructive person.

12) Consonant with their evaluation of these situations, policemen of both groups plan to proceed in the normal police manner, such as "apprehend" or "take to court." Their orientation toward troublemakers and known offenders is manifested in their failure to take any positive steps toward understanding their actions, or even toward making helpful suggestions.

13) The justification of these actions are in line with them. Officers of both groups believe the citizen and the community need protection. If this means treating such deviants in the manner just described, then this is what should be done. As two of the men put it:

It is the police officer's duty to investigate and more important to protect life and property.

His arrest would cut down on house breaks.



### Citizens as Victims

1) As with the goal of investigating an offender's role in a case, policemen divide the investigation of a victim's role into minor and major offenses. Because investigation, at this point, involves only the innocent, they are more deeply concerned, humane, and open-minded in their orientation.

2) Policemen of both groups believe that minor incidents mean little, if anything, to the victims. The incidents are seldom more than an inconvenience, for there is no real threat. Any property damage incurred is repaired by a third party, such as an insurance company or other individual:

She was not too concerned, because she was not at fault. She was more concerned with the missed appointment.

(It) just meant the police had come along, and he was quite pleased they had arrived.

To him it meant he was right and had the right-of-way.

(They were) obeying the law--they were required to report anything over \$200.

Student policemen dealing with offenses of more serious nature, see the victim as pleased with their arrival.

Members of the comparison group are more rigid. They are narrower in their perceptions of citizen evaluations of their encounters with police. These men believe that citizens are suspicious of their motives in questioning them, even when they themselves have called the police. Indeed, these observations suggest a lack of confidence among victims in

the policeman's ability to handle, adequately, the situation.

3-5) Like law-abiding citizens, victims, in minor incidents, are seen by both student and comparison groups as intending to cooperate because they are innocent and, therefore, cooperation will help their cause. In the words of some of the officers:

He cooperated by giving details not mentioned by the older fellow, because he felt he was not at fault.

She intended to give the necessary information, because she is not at fault.

He intended to give information and cooperate, because he wanted the guy apprehended.

He decided to tell it as it happened, because the actions of the other driver justified his responses.

Student policemen dealing with victims of serious offenses also see them as intending to cooperate, an orientation that appears to carry with it a feeling of confidence in the policemen's ability to handle adequately the situation and to protect the individual from further harrassment.

Because members of the comparative group feel that victims are suspicious of their investigations, they also feel such people will be uncooperative when involved in a serious crime. Where these policemen do see a victim as intending to cooperate, they believe he justifies his actions with some ulterior motive, such as to avoid direct questioning or to make himself look better. Consistent with earlier observations is the implication here that victim suspiciousness and lack of cooperation is, at bottom, an absence of

confidence in the officer's ability to investigate the complaint and thereby to afford protection. These policemen described their perceptions in the following way:

He would try and find out on his own and forward any information he received. However, he was unconcerned about the incident and would probably make no effort to assist.

At first she did not cooperate because she was afraid of me and her parents, but later told all.

He was going to be helpful, but since he was the owner of the money, he would give information that would benefit himself.

6) As with other kinds of citizens, the officers believe that victims see them as performing the normal duties of policemen as policemen. Additionally, the students see themselves pictured in minor offenses as neutral mediators of disputes between two opposing parties. They see themselves reflected in more serious offenses as protectors of the public interest and safety and as upholders of the law who can competently handle the situation.

Such views are rare among the comparison group, where one is struck by their reflected image as an ordinary and sometimes incompetent police officer. As seen in our observations concerning indicators 11 through 13, this sort of image influences the responses of these men to the victims of serious crime.

7-10) The fundamental differences between the student and comparison groups in their interaction with victims begin to appear in their perceptions of victims' pictures of

their intentions, actions and justifications for those actions. In minor offenses, the police students believe that victims see them as intending to give needed help, while competently providing the expertise to correct the injustice. They see themselves through the citizens' eyes as being on their side.

He thought his actions were correct, and I would make the right decision.

She felt I would be able to help if necessary, and I was on her side.

He knew I would take the information, and thought we would do something about it.

He thought we would find the guy responsible and solve his problem for him.

(They believed I would) investigate the matter and interview the person responsible and take the necessary action.

She knew I would take information and try and help.

The students see themselves as even more welcome to the victim when the offense is serious. It is from such a perceived outlook that they infer a confidence in their abilities among the citizens they encounter. There are, at times, situations in which the students see attributed to themselves the plan of following normal police practice and justifying that action through their duty as police officers. This perception, however, is far more common in the comparison group.

11-13) With respect to these indicators, members of both groups have little to say about minor incidents, since they are usually routine and require no special attention by

an investigating officer. Whether or not the victim sees such incidents as important, the policemen are relatively unmoved by his reaction and maintain their routine orientation. Observations on the investigation of serious cases from the victim's side are largely the same for these indicators as the corresponding observations presented earlier about law-abiding offenders. The students approach victims with more open-mindedness, greater understanding, and more concern for their well-being than those in the comparison groups.

#### THE GOAL OF ARREST

##### Law-Abiding Citizens as Offenders

1) As with the goal of investigating a case involving a law-abiding citizen as offender, the goal of arresting him can be further divided into the categories of minor and major offenses. Because this goal requires the policeman to take a decisive step--either arrest or ticket--one usually finds a somewhat firmer interpretation of such incidents.

2) The second year of research has, in the main, confirmed the observations made in 1972 on Indicator 2. Generally, members of both groups of policemen see the offender as worried about the possibility of arrest and its consequences. The 1973 observations do suggest that those in the comparison group are more inclined than their student counterparts to perceive the offender as unconcerned about

arrest and its consequences, even when the offense is serious.

It meant nothing.

It meant nothing at all.

Not that much. He was caught by the police and had to take the consequences.

They did not see the individual as concerned about the incident or the damage he had caused.

3-5) The general theme of the observations in 1972, but especially in 1973, is the perception by both groups of citizens intent to cooperate. The 1973 research indicates that this is true, whatever the officer's goal (investigation or arrest) or kind of citizen encountered, excluding trouble-makers and known offenders. With a couple of idiosyncratic exceptions, the justifications perceived are the same.

The more recent observations do suggest, however, that there are times when even the students, when arresting as when investigating, see law-abiding citizens as intending to be uncooperative. This occurs with serious offenses, where such behavior is seen as being justified by the belief that cooperation can only cause the offender further trouble by giving officials more evidence with which to convict him.

6-13) The remainder of the indicators that guided data collection with respect to the arrest of law-abiding citizens yielded no new information. That is, both the police students and their counterparts in the comparison group tended to respond to the observer's probes with the same answers they gave when he asked about these parts of their definitions

of investigation situations. Such a similarity of findings, except for the firmer tone of the responses to probes pertaining to this goal, is understandable when one considers that the policeman is interacting with the same type of individual involving the same type of criminal activity. The only difference is that on this occasion he intends to arrest rather than merely investigate the offender.

#### A SPECIAL COMPARISON

Comparison of the responses of two men who were members of the comparison group in the 1972 study and became members of the student group in the 1973 study, reveals certain critical differences in their approach to offenders after one year in the program. When their goal is investigation of a minor offense, perpetrated by a law-abiding offender, both men, as members of the comparison group in 1972, stated that most of the time these incidents were routine to them and that the offender held the same view. The only thought given to him was that occasionally he might be seen as cooperative in order to serve better his own interests. At the end of their first year in the program, these two officers, even when it comes to investigating serious offenses, now express greater concern for the offender and his plight. They also display more confidence in their own ability to handle the situation.

Their arrests of law-abiding offenders place these men in a still more favorable light. The serious incidents in which they were observed in 1973 show that they now try to understand the situation and to protect the offender from further harm to himself, often by arresting him. No such concern was expressed in similar encounters during the previous year even when events warranted such a response. In both 1972 and 1973, however, they showed a degree of concern for the protection of personal and community property. In 1972 justifications for such protection were based on one's duty as a police officer, while in the second year these men saw their actions as helping the community as well as expressing their duty.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> It may come as a surprise to those unacquainted with the population characteristics of St. John's that citizens have not been found to be identified by race. No wonder, the city is almost entirely a community of Caucasians. In 1971, only 50 of the 88,105 people in St. John's were black. Another 15 were either Amerindian or Eskimo, while 225 were Chinese.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

The observations reported here lend a substantial degree of support to the main prediction of this research project--that any significant change in the ways the student police officers define the occupational situations in which they deal with the public must have resulted from the effects of the diploma program. In supporting this prediction the data here also shows that aims (a) and (b) of the program have at least been partially met. At present one is unable to state how much more extensive the differences might be between the policemen who have by this time completed the program and the matched comparison groups. Based on their experiences of one or two years in the program, the students observed have manifested some clear and significant differences, which alone, would justify the existence of such a program.

There are of course certain methodological weaknesses that demand consideration. Included among these is the lack of a measure of police definitions of citizen encounters before entry into the program. As stated earlier, the ideal design would have been to study the experimental groups in certain situations before they started the diploma program, and then to compare their responses with those given to like situations following the first, second and third years of

the study. However, this research was not conceived until the diploma program had completed several months of operation. Moreover, those admitted to the program for the following year were not notified of their acceptance till shortly before classes began, allowing the researcher little time to observe them in the performance of their law enforcement duties. The best alternative was to select a comparison group matched on all relevant background variables (see Tables I and II, Appendix II). Unfortunately, attempts to control for the background influences in this fashion are never as effective as we would like them to be.

A second potential weakness concerns the authenticity of the responses by the police subjects to the probes. It is possible that they wished to impress the researcher by telling him what they think he wished to hear. Although it may be possible for some students actually to feign the routine expression of what they have learned in their courses, the occurrence of such deception appears improbable. If these students have made the exceptional effort required to learn the instructional material to the extent that they can turn its expression on and off at will during the evaluation by the researcher or at any other time, it is safe to conclude that they genuinely wish to apply it whenever appropriate. Any student who is unable to accept the perspective fostered by the program, who might wish to feign that perspective for personal reasons, would be very unlikely to assimilate the

rather complex ideas imparted there. Learning would be noticeably impaired by his countervailing value system. He would likely fail the course examinations. And, without that knowledge, he could not possibly pretend to have it while encountering citizens on the job.

In addition to these weaknesses, there are those commonly associated with all participant observer research, such as lack of randomness of sample, imprecise interviewing procedures, personal bias in analysis, and lack of statistical proof. These are considered at length in the methodology literature and, therefore, need no special treatment here. Instead we turn, now, to the hypotheses that have emerged from this study, which beg the confirmation possible under more rigorous controls than used here.

#### HYPOTHESES

When the policeman's goal is the investigation of a case involving a citizen-offender in an incident of a minor nature that does not threaten the offender's freedom,

1. both students and non-students believe such incidents mean little, if anything, to the offender;
2. both students and non-students see these offenders as willing to cooperate with them in order to achieve a favorable outcome to the situation for the latter;

3. both students and non-students see their intentions, actions, and justifications for such actions through the eyes of the offenders, as in accordance with usual police procedure;
4. both students and non-students see the incident, as reflected in citizen behavior, as meaning nothing to them except being routine incidents that one must handle in the course of one's work as a police officer.

When their goal is the investigation of a case involving a citizen-offender in serious incidents,

1. both students and non-students see the offender as anxious about the situation and its consequences for him;
2. (a) both students and non-students see some of these offenders as believing they can better their position by cooperating and doing just that;  
(b) both students and non-students see other of these offenders as believing that further cooperation can only endanger their freedom, and thus failing to cooperate;
3. whether the citizen offender is perceived to be cooperative or uncooperative,  
(a) students, in contrast to non-students, believe he sees them as competent individuals able to make a reasonable decision;

(b) students believe this type of offender sees them as keeper of the public good, justifying their actions through an interest in minimizing the potential danger both to the victim and to the community;

(c) both students and non-students view all incidents they encounter with open-minded perceptiveness;

(d) the students alone express compassion for this offender and a concern for his physical and mental well-being;

(e) only students attempt to alleviate the harmful effects of the situation for the offender and the community;

(f) students, in contrast to non-students, justify such procedures out of a genuine concern for the welfare of all.

When their goal is to investigate a case involving a victim in minor incidents,

1. both students and non-students believe he sees minor incidents as meaning nothing more than inconveniences to them;
2. both students and non-students see him as willing to cooperate with the officer because such cooperation can do nothing but help him;
3. students see themselves as mediators in a dispute, in contrast to the typically passive stance of the non-students;

4. (a) students see themselves, through his eyes, as being helpful and engendering confidence in their abilities to handle the situation;  
(b) non-students see themselves, through his eyes, as officers of the law with a job to do;
5. both students and non-students act in a routine manner and justify this through normal police procedure.

When the goal is to investigate a case involving a victim in incidents of a more serious nature,

1. (a) students believe he sees the incident as important, with the police being needed to help resolve the problem;  
(b) non-students believe he views intervention by the police with hostility and suspicion, while showing little concern for the seriousness of the incident;
2. (a) students see him as intending to cooperate with the investigating officer and therefore as someone who can be trusted;  
(b) non-students see him as intending to be uncooperative with investigating officers while suspecting them of ulterior motives for investigating the case;
3. (a) students see themselves, as reflected in his eyes, as humane and competent;  
(b) non-students see themselves, as reflected in his eyes, as merely performing the typical role a police officer always performs;

4. (a) students see their own intentions, actions, and justifications for such actions, through his eyes, as intending help for someone who has been victimized, and a solution to the problem at hand;  
(b) non-students see their own intentions, actions, and justifications, through his eyes, as expressing a lack of his ability to solve the problem;
5. (a) students show concern for his physical and mental well-being;  
(b) students believe he has confidence in their ability to solve the incident;  
(c) non-students see the incidents as little more than a job that has to be done;
6. students and non-students plan to treat that incident in a routine way;
7. (a) students justify their actions out of a concern for him and his plight;  
(b) non-students justify their actions as part of a regular work requirement.

When their goal is to arrest a citizen offender in an incident of a serious nature,

1. (a) students see him as worried about the possibility of arrest and its consequences;  
(b) non-students see him as relatively unconcerned about the possibility of arrest and its consequences;
2. both students and non-students see him intending to



cooperate in the majority of cases.

The remainder of the hypotheses here are the same as those dealing with investigation of a case involving the citizen-offender in incidents of a serious nature.

When their goals are to investigate a case and to make an arrest involving known-offenders as offenders,

1. both students and non-students see him as disrespectful and fearful of the law and as hostile toward its officers;
2. both students and non-students see him as suspicious of them and their motives and therefore intends to be uncooperative;
3. both students and non-students believe the known-offender sees them as ruthless, heartless persons, working only to benefit themselves;
4. both students and non-students see their intentions, actions and justifications of these actions, through his eyes, as dishonorable, strict and impersonal in order to arrest the known-offender;
5. both students and non-students see him and his acts as dangerous;
6. both students and non-students intend to deal with the situation in the usual police manner;
7. both students and non-students justify their actions as protection of the community even if this means impinging on the rights of the known-offender.

In addition to the new knowledge that has been gained on how policemen define their occupational encounters with the public, this study has served another, possibly equally important function. It has shown that the concept "definition of the situation" can be a useful sensitizing concept, whose function it is to suggest the direction along which to look in research and to give one a sense of what is relevant there. The task of science, of course, is hardly finished when such exploration is completed. A valuable foundation has been laid, however, upon which may now proceed the testing of the foregoing hypotheses. Similar sequences of research events-- exploration followed by confirmation--should also be undertaken in other communities to determine how police definitions of the same public encounters vary with respect to the thirteen indicators. If this is done, we shall eventually establish what is broadly common to such police definitions in many communities and what is unique to their definitions in particular communities or types of communities.

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**APPENDIX I**



diploma program  
in

**law enforcement**  
and  
**community relations**



offered by the Extension Service, Memorial University



diploma program

in

law enforcement

and

community relations

for the Newfoundland Constabulary

offered through the joint effort of the Extension Service, the Department of Social Work, and the Department of Sociology, of Memorial University of Newfoundland in cooperation with the Provincial Department of Justice.

1973 - 1974

**NEWFOUNDLAND CONSTABULARY****QUALIFICATIONS FOR CANDIDATES**

Candidates, before they can be admitted to the Force, will be subjected to an examination in Reading, Writing, and the first four simple rules of Arithmetic; they must be of good character for honesty, sobriety, and fidelity. They must be of strong build and robust constitution, and at least 5 feet 10 inches in height without shoes, 36 inches round chest, unmarried, and between 19 and 28 years of age.

(From Police Regulations under  
John R. McCowen, Inspector General  
1895-1908.)

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Stipendiary Magistrate Dogan D. Akman  
 Deputy Assistant Chief: John R. Browne, Newfoundland Constabulary  
 Dr. G.B. Inglis, Head, Centre for Community Development  
 Chief J.F. Lawlor, Newfoundland Constabulary  
 Mr. Vincent P. McCarthy, Deputy Minister of Justice  
 Professor Leonard Richards, Head, Department of Social Work  
 Mr. D. Snowden, Director, Extension Service  
 Dr. Robert Stebbins, Department of Sociology, University of Texas  
 Arlington  
 Mr. E. Strickland, Extension Service

## Student Representatives

Const. E. Bussey, Newfoundland Constabulary (2nd year class)  
 Sgt. R. Steele, Newfoundland Constabulary (3rd year class)  
 First year class representative to be named.

## TEACHING STAFF

Mr. David Day, B.A., LL.B.  
 Lewis, Day, Sparkes, Cook & Sheppard  
 Mr. Frank Hawkins, M.S.W.  
 Assistant Professor of Social Work  
 Dr. Myles Hopper, Ph.D. (Anthropology)  
 Assistant Professor of Social Work and Medicine  
 Dr. Peter Markestyn, M.D., L.M.C.C.  
 Provincial Forensic Pathologist and  
 Faculty of Medicine, M.U.N.  
 Dr. C.S. Mellor, C.S., M.D., D.P.M., Ph.D.  
 Department of Psychiatry  
 Faculty of Medicine, M.U.N.  
 Professor L. Richards, M.S.W.  
 Head, Department of Social Work, M.U.N.  
 Mr. Noel Veitch, M.A., M.Ed.  
 Assistant Professor of Education  
 Constable Simeon Wentzell  
 Newfoundland Constabulary

Additional instructors to be appointed.

## THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The main objectives are to provide officers with:

1. The professional knowledge base and skills required in the pursuit and maintenance of high standards of law enforcement and community relations;
2. An understanding of the social, psychological and cultural forces which impinge upon the life of communities, the enforcement of laws, and the role and status of the police in the community;
3. A generic training in preparation for advanced study in specialized areas of law enforcement and community relations.

The program will be co-ordinated with the current in-service training provided by the Newfoundland Constabulary.

## THE LENGTH AND DURATION OF THE PROGRAM

The program will consist of twelve (12) courses offered over three years at the rate of two courses per term.

Each course will be offered once a week for two hours minimum and three hours maximum for a full academic term of fourteen (14) weeks.

## NATURE OF INSTRUCTION

The courses will be offered in seminar form to insure maximum student participation and with particular emphasis on the particular needs of the students as a group and on an individual basis.

The courses will use, wherever possible, the latest instructional techniques and audio-visual equipment.

## LIBRARY FACILITIES

In addition to the library facilities available at the University, it is hoped that in due course a reference library for ready access will be developed in co-operation with the Newfoundland Constabulary. It is further expected that supplementary reference materials and selected readings will be accumulated in the course of the development of the program.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The performance of students will be graded as Pass/Fail and Distinction. Students who pass eight (8) courses with the grade of "Distinction" will earn the mention of "Distinction" on their diplomas. Students who fail a course will be allowed to write one supplementary examination. However, the number of supplementary examinations is limited to one for each of the three years. Students who fail more than one course per year will be allowed to proceed at the discretion of the Newfoundland Constabulary upon the recommendation of the Program Administration Committee.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

1st year: 1st term

### HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

The course is devoted to the study of human behaviour through an examination of personality, its development and adaptation. Particular attention will be paid to the nature of common human needs and the psycho-social factors which affect behaviour under normal as well as stress conditions.

### PUBLIC SPEAKING

The course is designed to provide and improve the basic skills for effective oral communication in a variety of settings and situations with particular reference to police work.

1st year: 2nd term

### CRIMINAL LAW

The course surveys the socio-legal principles and philosophy of criminal law, examines the role of the police in the enforcement of laws in terms of general and individual deterrence, crime prevention and control. The major part of the course deals more specifically with the explanation and analysis of the legal provisions and procedures concerning evidence, search and seizure, arrest, interrogation, detention, bail, the rights and privileges of suspects as well as the rights and duties of the police officers during investigation, arrest and prosecution.

## INTERVIEWING AND REPORT WRITING

The course consists of two parts. The first part deals with the nature and techniques of interviewing behaviour with emphasis on police interrogation as a particular type of interviewing process. The second part will deal with the recording of police data collected during interviews, interrogations and investigation. The emphasis will be in developing the skills necessary for effective communication through written reports.

2nd year: 1st term

## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

The course surveys and discusses the major areas of criminal investigation with emphasis on the psychological aspects of investigation, identification of individuals, collection and preservation of evidence, the nature and functions of police laboratories, and various types of documents. These topics are discussed with reference to specific problems and techniques involved in the investigation of major types of offences such as homicide, burglary, larceny, robbery, arson and sex offences.

## HUMAN AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS I: THE COMMUNITY

The course is designed to provide the basic knowledge base for the analysis and understanding of community life processes. Following the examination of the community institutions and their components, the course will focus on the major social economic and cultural processes of community life and the ways in which these processes relate to a variety of behaviour patterns and attitudes towards the law and law enforcement agencies.

## FORENSIC MEDICINE AND PSYCHIATRY

The course surveys the basic theoretical and practice principles of medicine and psychiatry as they relate to the detection and investigation of the major types of criminal offences and anti-social behaviour. The survey also comprises an examination of the nature and scope of the contribution of a number of disciplines and technologies related to forensic medicine and psychiatry.

#### HUMAN AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS II: COMMUNITY NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

The course consists of a series of case studies of selected types of community groups and neighbourhoods in terms of their structure and characteristics, specific needs and problems, and the implications of these upon the law enforcement processes. These case studies are used to analyse and illustrate a number of methods and techniques designed to avoid and/or reduce potential and actual conflicts in law enforcement and to promote mutually positive relations between various segments of the community and police officers.

3rd year: 1st term

#### POLICE ADMINISTRATION I: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF ORGANIZATIONS

The course provides a basic understanding of the nature and operation of formal organizations with particular attention to the concepts of bureaucracy, the distribution of power and authority, chains of command, span of control, formal and informal organizational relationships and esprit de corps. The concepts are illustrated through the critical examination of a number of case studies prepared by various police departments. The case studies are also used to illustrate the implications of certain types of organizational arrangements and behaviour patterns on the community's perception of the law enforcement processes and its attitudes towards police officers.

#### HUMAN AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS III: SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

The course deals with the nature and definitions of social problems and analyses a number of social problems in terms of their nature, causes and impact on community life and on the processes of law enforcement. Problems such as individual and group delinquency, professional crime, white collar crime, alcoholism and the non-medical use of drugs, and neighbourhood conflicts, are examined through group discussion and independent research.

3rd year: 2nd term

**POLICE ADMINISTRATION II: POLICY, PLANNING, BUDGETING  
AND MANAGEMENT**

The course examines the concepts of planning, policy formation, budgeting and management in terms of the specific functions and needs of law enforcement agencies. The examination leads to the identification of the major principles and techniques of effective police administration at the various levels of the organizational hierarchy as well as in all areas of police activities.

**HUMAN AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS IV: INTEGRATION SEMINAR**

The course is designed as an integration seminar to provide an opportunity for the critical examination of the material covered during the preceding eleven courses and to analyse in depth selected issues of law enforcement and community relations.

**PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

In order to assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated objectives, the Advisory Committee commissioned Professor Robert A. Stebbins to design and carry out an evaluative research program.

The work began towards the end of the first academic year in 1972 and will continue for four years.

Information concerning the theoretical framework, the methodology and the preliminary results of this project may be obtained from The Extension Service, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland, or by writing directly to Professor Stebbins at the Department of Sociology, University of Texas, Arlington, Texas.



**APPENDIX II**

TABLE I  
MATCHING INFORMATION FOR THE FOURTEEN OFFICERS  
OF FIRST YEAR'S STUDY

Demographic Variables						
Policemen	Rank	Age	Education	Years of Service	Division	Background
Student	Sgt.	36	XI	16 1/2	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Sgt.	36	XI	17 1/2	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	32	XI	12	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	30	X	7	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	31	XI	9	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	30	X	7	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	34	XI (Teach.Lic.)	8	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	31	XI (Teach.Lic.)	9	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	33	XI	15	Acc.Invest.	Rural
Comparison	Const.	33	XI	14	Acc.Invest.	Rural
Student	D/Const.	35	XI	13 1/2	C.I.D.	Rural
Comparison	D/Const.	33	X	14 1/2	C.I.D.	Rural
Student	D/Const.	37	XI	14	C.I.D.	Rural
Comparison	D/Const.	38	XI	13	C.I.D.	Urban*

\*In order to obtain an officer with roughly comparable age and experience, it was necessary to select one with an urban background.

TABLE II

MATCHING INFORMATION FOR THE TWENTY-SIX OFFICER SUBJECTS  
OF THE SECOND YEAR'S STUDY

Policemen	Rank	Demographic Variables				
		Age	Education	Years of Service	Division	Background
Student	Det.	38	XI	15	CID	Rural
Comparison	Det.	39	XI	14	CID	Urban*
Student	Det.	36	XI	14	CID	Rural
Comparison	Det.	34	X	15	CID	Rural
Student	Det.	34	X	15	CID	Rural
Comparison	Det.	32	X	12	CID	Rural
Student	Det.	33	X	12	CID	Urban*
Comparison	Det.	35	XI	9	CID	Rural
Student	Const.	34	XI	16	Acc. Invest.	Rural
Comparison	Const.	28	XI	7	Acc. Invest.	Rural**
Student	Const.	34	XI	15	Acc. Invest.	Rural
Comparison	Const.	26	XI (Comm.)	7	Acc. Invest.	Rural**
Student	Const.	32	XI	10	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	30	XI	7	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	32	XI	11	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	32	XI	11	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	34	XI	10	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	30	XI	8	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	33	XI	11	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	32	X	9	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	32	XI	12	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	34	IX	14	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	29	XI	11	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	28	X	9	St. Patrol	Rural
Student	Const.	32	XI	10	St. Patrol	Rural
Comparison	Const.	34	XI	13	St. Patrol	Rural

\* In order to obtain an officer with roughly comparable age and experience, it was necessary to match one with an urban background with one of a rural background.

\*\* Because the Acc. Invest. Division is so small, employing some eight individuals, the researcher was forced to select for the comparison group from the men available at the time of the study. This meant selecting those of a younger age and shorter experience than their diploma counterparts employed in this division.

TABLE III

## OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE DEFINITION OF THE SITUATION

- 
- 
- 1) Identification of the citizens present and their behavior. Who are these people and what are they doing?
  - 2) Perception of the citizens' evaluations of the situation. What does this situation or event mean to them?
  - 3) Perception of citizens' goals while in the situation. What did they intend to do?
  - 4) Perception of citizens' plans of actions. How are they going to reach these goals?
  - 5) Perception of citizens' justifications for having such goals and pursuing them in the ways planned. How did they justify their goals and plans?
  - 6) Perception of self by citizens. Who do these people think I am?
  - 7) Perception of evaluation imputed to self by citizens. What do these people think they and their behavior mean to me?
  - 8) Perception of goals imputed to self by citizens. What do these people think I intend to do about them and their behavior?
  - 9) Perception of plans of action imputed to self by citizens. How do these people think I will reach the goals?
  - 10) Perception of justifications of goals and plans imputed to self by citizens. How do these people think I will justify my goals and plans?
  - 11) Policeman's evaluation of the situation. What does this situation mean to me?
  - 12) Policeman's plans of action. How will I reach my goal?
  - 13) Policeman's justification of his goals and plans. How do I justify these goals and plans?
- 
-

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS ENCOUNTERED  
AS OFFENDERS WHILE INVESTIGATING A CASE

Policemen	Type of incident	
	Major	Minor
Students	7	6
Non-students	6	6

TABLE V

NUMBER OF LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS ENCOUNTERED  
AS VICTIMS WHILE INVESTIGATING A CASE

Policemen	Type of Incident	
	Major	Minor
Students	10	4
Non-students	7	3

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF KNOWN-OFFENDERS AND TROUBLEMAKERS ENCOUNTERED  
AS OFFENDERS WHILE INVESTIGATING A CASE

Policemen	Type of Incident	
	Major	Minor
Students	3	1
Non-Students	4	1

TABLE VII

NUMBER OF LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS ENCOUNTERED  
AS OFFENDERS WHILE MAKING AN ARREST

Policemen	Type of Incident	
	Major	Minor
Students	7	2
Non-Students	6	4









